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Fiddle Faddle & Screaming Yellow Zonkers

I know the most popular candy corn out there is Cracker Jack, but my favorite has always been Screaming Yellow Zonkers and Fiddle Fiddle from Lincoln Snacks Company. Fiddle Fiddle is butter toffee-coated popcorn with almonds thrown in. Screaming Yellow Zonkers (you gotta love the name) is similar, but without the almonds. The secret to the yellow coloring of the Zonkers: buttered popcorn.

Fiddle Faddle (butter toffee with almonds) 3/4 cup granulated sugar

1/4 cup brown sugar

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter

1/2 cup corn syrup

1/2 cup water

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon vanilla

1 1/3 bags plain or natural-flavored microwave popcorn 1/2 cup roasted almonds

Zonkers

1 cup granulated sugar

4 tablespoons butter

1/2 cup corn syrup

1/2 cup water

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon vanilla

1 1/3 bags butter-flavored microwave popcorn 1. For either recipe, combine sugar, butter, corn syrup, water and salt in a large saucepan over medium heat. You're going to bring the candy to 265-275 degrees, or what is known as the hard ball stage. For this it's best to use a candy thermometer. If you don't have

one, don't worry. Drip the candy into a small glass of cold water. If the candy forms a very hard, yet slightly pliable ball, bingo, you're there. Watch your mixture closely so that it doesn't boil over.

2. While candy cooks, pop both bags of popcorn and spread about 2

quarts or 1 1/3 bags of popcorn (plus almonds for Fiddle Faddle) on one large or two small cookie sheets. Put the popcorn in your oven set on its lowest temperature. This will keep the popcorn hot so that the candy will coat better.

3. When your candy has reached the hard ball stage, add the vanilla.

4. Pull the popcorn from the oven and, working quickly, pour the candy over the popcorn in thin streams. Mix the popcorn so that each kernel is coated with candy, put the popcorn back into the oven for five more minutes, then stir once again. This will help to coat each kernel. You can repeat this step once more if necessary to get all of the popcorn coated. Pour popcorn onto a large sheet of wax paper to cool. Spread the popcorn out, but be careful...it's hot.

5. When popcorn is cool, break it up and immediately put it into a tightly sealed container, such as Tupperware. This will ensure that it stays fresh. This stuff gets stale very quickly in moist climates if

left out.

Makes about 4 quarts.